

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5010

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation, February 1, 2007
Ways & Means, February 27, 2007

Title: An act relating to creating a state park foster home pass.

Brief Description: Creating a state park foster home pass.

Sponsors: Senators Honeyford and Hewitt.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation: 1/24/07, 2/01/07 [DP-WM].
Ways & Means: 2/12/07, 2/27/07 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, OCEAN & RECREATION

Majority Report: Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Jacobsen, Chair; Rockefeller, Vice Chair; Morton, Ranking Minority Member; Fraser, Hargrove, Spanel, Stevens and Swecker.

Staff: Curt Gavigan (786-7437)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5010 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Prentice, Chair; Fraser, Vice Chair, Capital Budget Chair; Pridemore, Vice Chair, Operating Budget; Zarelli, Ranking Minority Member; Brandland, Fairley, Hatfield, Hewitt, Hobbs, Honeyford, Keiser, Kohl-Welles, Oemig, Parlette, Rasmussen, Regala, Roach, Rockefeller, Schoesler and Tom.

Staff: Kirstan Arestad (786-7708)

Background: Washington statute provides state park fee discounts and exemptions to several categories of residents. These classes include: (1) senior citizens with a limited income; (2) disabled persons; and (3) disabled veterans. Generally, the exemptions provide free park admission and a 50 percent reduction in camping fees. The disabled veteran exemption, however, provides free park admission, an exemption from camping reservation fees, and free camping.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

The state of Oregon has adopted legislation and regulations exempting foster parents from state park fees when accompanied by a foster child. When arriving at a park, a foster parent must show park staff the certificate proving their foster parent status in order to receive the exemption. Foster parents are eligible for free camping and day use at Oregon state parks.

Summary of Bill: A foster home pass is created for Washington residents who: (1) provide licensed foster care under a foster family home license; or (2) serve as a relative caregiver to a child placed with that resident by the Department of Social and Health Services or a child placing agency. When accompanied by a foster child, the pass entitles the holder to free admission and free camping at state parks. The pass does not expressly provide an exemption from camping reservation fees.

Applicants must request a pass from the State Parks and Recreation Commission (Commission). The Commission must verify with the Department of Social and Health Services that the applicant is eligible for a pass. The Commission must issue passes for no less than one year.

Several terms are defined by referencing the statutes governing foster care. Technical changes are also made regarding the organization of the park pass statute.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY RECOMMENDED SUBSTITUTE AS PASSED COMMITTEE (Ways & Means): State Parks and Recreation Commission is required to negotiate and pay costs to allow holders of the foster home park pass free access and use of park campsites at Central Ferry, Chief Timothy, Crow Butte, and Lyons Ferry in Asotin County. The Commission will request reimbursement on a biennial basis.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation): PRO: Foster parents provide a valuable service to the people of Washington, and often struggle to make ends meet. This is a way of providing recreational opportunities and showing the state's appreciation.

OTHER: This bill will have a fiscal impact, and the State Parks and Recreation Commission stays neutral on bills with fiscal impacts that are not recognized in the Governor's budget.

Persons Testifying (Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation): PRO: Senator Honeyford, prime sponsor.

OTHER: Fred Romero, State Parks and Recreation Commission.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Ways & Means): PRO: This is a good way for us to say thanks to parents who care for foster children. I hope we can find funds to offset some of the lost revenue.

The policy of the bill is not a problem. Getting kids into parks is a good way to use parks, but the fiscal impact is of concern. I hope you'll look at actual cost of implementation and at funding parks, as the projected loss of revenue to the Parks Renewal Stewardship Account seems too high.

Persons Testifying (Ways & Means): PRO: Senator Honeyford, prime sponsor; Jim King, Citizens for Parks and Recreation.